

children from the acne drug Accutane. As a legislator, I have called for more restrictions on the distribution of this drug, which is known to cause severe birth defects and a form of impulsive behavior and depression in people taking this drug.

This drug has devastated my family with the loss of our son BJ and more than 250 other families who have lost their young son or daughter while he or she was taking the drug Accutane.

Recent news stories concerning the safety of prescription drugs have quoted an FDA safety reviewer, Dr. David Graham, when he spoke to the Senate Finance Committee. Dr. Graham said, "I would argue that the FDA as currently configured is incapable of protecting America against another Vioxx." He told the Senate Finance Committee that "there are at least 5 other drugs on the market today that should be looked at seriously to see whether they should remain on the market." He cited the acne drug Accutane.

Why Accutane? Accutane is the poster child for why we need an independent body to approve and review drug safety. Accutane causes horrendous birth defects and may cause psychiatric disorders such as depression and suicide. It is linked to over 250 suicides, according to the FDA.

A recent study by Dr. J. Douglas Bremner demonstrates how Accutane affects the brain, possibly causing impulsive behavior due to changes in the orbitofrontal cortex. This is the front part of the brain. This is an area known to mediate depression.

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Our investigation, that of the Committee on Energy and Commerce, found that the dosage for Accutane may be way too high.

Too much Accutane, a synthetic vitamin A, causes cerebri tumor or a pseudo tumor in some patients. Some pseudo tumor is a warning that is found on Accutane packaging, but what does it really mean?

What it really means is it causes severe headaches. And while it acts like a tumor in the brain, it cannot be discovered. CAT scans will not show it. There is no evidence of a tumor. So what happens?

As Dr. Bremner showed us here in this study of the orbitofrontal cortex, there is a decrease in the metabolism of the brain. This PET scan right here establishes a baseline of a person before they started Accutane, here on my far right-hand side. This PET scan of the same person 4 months later, while on Accutane, in the first PET scan, the color red representing brain activity in the front part of the brain. Now in the second PET scan after 4 months, notice very little red, representing decreased brain activity in the same person after 4 months of treatment on Accutane. Accutane decreases the metabolism in the front part of the brain.

This is one slide that Dr. Bremner has shared with us. There is a 21 per-

cent decrease in brain metabolism in this patient. This only occurred in some of the Accutane patients. Dr. Bremner also did PET scans with other patients taking oral antibiotics for acne, and none showed brain changes. It is not all Accutane patients who demonstrated a brain change, just those of who complained of headaches. Is the excessive dosage found in the current formula of Accutane that is prescribed to young people, is this the cause of the change of young people that we see?

Medical evidence is clear that Accutane causes medical changes in the brain, and this may be what leads some people to take their own life through impulsive behavior.

Even today, USA Today, dated 12/7/2004, "Drug Maker Rebuffed Call To Monitor Users," a special report in USA Today. What did it say? That the manufacturer, Hoffman-LaRoche, knew that this drug causes depression and impulsive behavior, but it did not want to warn anyone for fear of loss of sales in the U.S. market.

The medical evidence is clear. Accutane causes changes in the brain, and this may be what leads some young people to take their own life. Let us join with Dr. Graham, the Centers for Disease Control, and other health care groups that have expressed strong concerns about the safety of this drug and who have called for Accutane to be withdrawn from the market as far back as 1990. For 14 years these groups have been saying because of the birth defects and psychiatric impact of this drug, we should withdraw it from the market until we have some answers.

Let us pull this drug from the market until we have all the answers surrounding this powerful, dangerous drug called Accutane. Is this decreased metabolism that we see here in the PET scan reversible? Will the brain repair itself? What amount or dose of Accutane is safe? What amount of Accutane can be safely taken by young people so the brain is not affected? These are questions that must be answered to protect our young people.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. OSE). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BURTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. BURTON of Indiana addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. KING) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. KING of Iowa addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE REFORM ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentle-

woman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I wish all of my colleagues a safe and prosperous holiday season; a time to fellowship with our family members and friends; time for our spiritual reflection of our respective faiths; a time to wish for a better life for all of us.

We finally finished, Mr. Speaker, a very long journey; and that journey started on that fateful day of 9/11. So many of us can remember.

My recollection serves me well. It was a Tuesday morning. Some of us had already come to this Capitol, engaged in meetings, prepared to do the normal business of the House. Within a flicker of an eye, the buildings in New York were struck; the Pentagon had gone up, a portion of it in smoke; and in a field in Pennsylvania, a plane had nose dived, killing all.

I repeat this because for some reason this intelligence debate took on a life of its own, maybe even caused confusion among the American public. But it did not cause confusion among those family members who had lost loved ones and those who lost their lives who are not here now to tell us their story.

The real crux of the debacle and the tragedy of 9/11 was a failure on the part of this government. We failed in understanding the necessity of human intelligence. We failed in understanding the surge of terrorist acts around the world. It was not a Republican failure or a Democratic failure. It was a failure of government, and we failed the American people and those who lost their lives. That is why I was so baffled by the long, extended time it took for this body to pass the 9/11 Commission report. Gratefully, after a long debate, we had a 9/11 Commission, and even that was opposed.

Democrats strongly supported this Commission, but after the report went through and the balance of the representation of the Commission, Democrats and Republicans, who meticulously listened to testimony after testimony, reviewed documents after documents, and came up with what I think was a fair response to the tragedy of 9/11, they gave us a road map upon which we could base our lack of understanding to make it better for the future.

We are very fortunate, and I would not give this credit to any one party. We came together. We forged a Homeland Security Department. I have the honor of serving on the Select Committee on Homeland Security. We had hearing after hearing trying to explore where there were loopholes in the system so we could ensure safety for the American people. Lo and behold, a report came out, the eloquent statements, tear-jerking statements of family members who tore at our heartstrings about what they went through, the gap of time, the lack of information, the lack of coordination. It was glaring. We had failed.